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I. Introduction

- A. Attention Grabber: Blood-shot eyes, bruised arms, empty bottles, a harried attitude; While an addict may deal with some of these problems, a family member will likely encounter stolen money, lies, guilt, a broken family, and the death of loved one.
- B. Thesis Statement: An addict's dependence on alcohol or drugs significantly changes his or her life; however, the overwhelming effect of the addiction on the person's family may be more substantial.

II. Enabling and Codependency- How family members become involved

- A. Codependents aren't crazier or sicker than alcoholics But, they hurt as much or more...they have gone through their pain without the anesthetizing effects of alcohol or other drugs...the pain that comes from loving someone who's in trouble can be profound" (Beattie 5).
- B. "A codependent person is one who has let another person's behavior affect him or her, and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behavior" (Beattie 31). In this case, the codependent chooses their actions and feelings based off an alcoholic or drug addicted person.
 - a. By giving money, empathy, alcohol, or drugs, enablers and codependents only harm themselves and the alcoholic or drug addict more. They feel required to help the addict, due to their close relationship; however, they need to focus on helping themselves instead.
- C. "Codependency involves a habitual system of thinking, feeling, and behaving toward ourselves and others that can cause us pain. Codependent behaviors or habits are self-destructive. We frequently react to people who are destroying themselves; we react by learning to destroy ourselves. These habits can lead us into, or keep us in, destructive relationships, relationships that don't work. These behaviors can sabotage relationships that many otherwise have worked. These behaviors can prevent us from finding peace and happiness with the most important person I our lives- ourselves" (Beattie 34).

III. Affects of drugs and alcohol on family in general

- A. "Drinking isolates most homes from the outside world" (Bill W. and Dr. Bob 131).

B. Families without drug addicts “function more democratically...with shared authority and better communication” (Stanton).

C. “Families of alcoholics have lower levels of family cohesion, expressiveness, independence, and intellectual orientation and higher levels of conflict compared with non-alcoholic families” (qtd. in “Parent-child Relationship...”).

D. “Alcoholism and other compulsive disorders are truly family illnesses” (Beattie 16).
a. Alcohol Anonymous, or Al-non, is an organization of people who addicts have affected. Al-non seeks to rebuild the relationships that addictive substances cause. It acts as a public family counseling session.

E. People who are personally affected by alcoholics and drug addicts often ask themselves how this person could do such a thing to them; how they could put them through this much pain. Some eventually come to see that the addict was not looking to harm them, but as an onlooker, they easily got in the way of that person’s desire (Sheff 319-320).

IV. An addicted parent’s effect on children

A. “Drug-using parents tend to have relationships that lack warmth and are full of conflict, she said. As a result, their children tend to be rebellious, aggressive and lacking in responsibility. They also tend to tolerate deviance” (Smith).

b. Children may feel embarrassed of their parent.

B. Children of addicted parents often think that “everything going on at home is their fault” (Smith).

C. “The inconsistency in parenting behaviors creates an unpredictable and unstable environment that can undermine the child’s mental and emotional growth” (qtd. in “Parent-child Relationship...”).

a. Offspring have trust issues with people because of their parent’s unfulfilled promises.

V. An addicted child’s effect parents

A. Sheff’s role as a father to his addicted son is exemplified when he says, “This [my desire to help Nic], mixed with my guilt and worry, consumed me” (10).

a. When a parent sees their child endure any hardship, it is quite a struggle but when drugs or alcohol are more important to the child than the he or she is, the parent may experience emotions far beyond imaginable.

B. One of the largest effects of drugs and alcohol on parents is that “ ‘Marriages can be destroyed when a child is a drug addict’ ” (Sheff 132).

C. Sheff notes, “My well-being has become dependent on Nic’s. When he is using, I’m in turmoil; when he’s not, I’m OK, but the relief is tenuous. The therapist says that parents of kids on drugs often get a form of posttraumatic stress syndrome made worse by the recurring nature of addiction”(228).

a. Parent(s) may feel responsible or think they caused their daughter or son’s addiction when they in fact have not.

D. “We [parents] are paranoid and crazy. It’s not only the addict who becomes paranoid and crazy” (Sheff 267).

VI. An addicted sibling’s effect on other siblings

A. “Late that afternoon, Jasper and Daisy burst in, dashing from room to room, before finally stopping and, looking up at me, asking, ‘Where’s Nic?’ ”(Sheff 9).

B. With children who are younger than the addicted sibling is, a common consequence is that they feel a sense of void. In *Beautiful Boy*, Nic’s younger siblings, “Daisy and Jasper miss him” (Sheff 230).

C. “...Siblings who use drugs may have more influence than parents” (Smith).

a. Sibling’s negative influence combating parents’ positive influence

b. Younger children have no one to look up to as a role model.

c. Siblings do not experience healthy sibling rivalry, which can help them develop a level head.

VII. Conclusion

A. Closing Thought: The effects of an addiction are innumerable. Drugs and alcohol ruin more than just an addict’s life; they cause damage to the network of relationships that surround the addict as well.